

話す日本語？

Ah...yes?



WHAT ARE THE HARDEST LANGUAGES TO LEARN?

A look at which languages are easiest and most difficult for English speakers to pick up.



THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE COMPILES LEARNING EXPECTATIONS FOR MANY LANGUAGES BASED ON THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES A NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER TO ACHIEVE SPEAKING AND READING PROFICIENCY.

Each Learner Is Different

The time it takes to learn a language depends on a number of factors:

- How close the new language is to your native language or other languages you know
- How complex the language is
- How many hours each week you devote to learning the language
- The language learning resources available to you
- Your motivation

Easy

Languages Closely Related to English

To achieve language proficiency...



23-24 weeks



575-600 class hours

Spanish
Español



329m

Portuguese
Português



178m

French
Français



67.8m

Italian
Italiano



61.7m

Romanian
Română



23.4m

Dutch
Nederlands



21.7m

Swedish
Svenska



8.3m

Afrikaans
Afrikaans



4.9m

Norwegian
Norsk



4.6m



Number of native speakers, in millions

Medium

Languages With Significant Differences From English

To achieve language proficiency...



44 weeks



1,110 class hours

Hindi

हिन्दी

India



182m

Thai

ไทย

Thailand



20.4m

Russian

Русский

Russia



144m

Serbian

Српски

Serbia



16.4m

Vietnamese

Tiếng Việt

Vietnam



68.6m

Greek

Ελληνικά

Greece



13.1m

Turkish

Türkçe

Turkey



50.8m

Hebrew

עברית

Israel



5.3m

Polish

Polski

Poland



40m

Finnish

Suomi

Finland



5m

[COUNTRY LANDMASSES NOT COMPARATIVELY SCALED]



Number of native speakers, in millions

Hard

Languages That Are Difficult for Native English Speakers

To achieve language proficiency...



1.69 years
(88 weeks)



2,200 class hours

العربية

Arabic



221 million native speakers

Country with greatest number of speakers:



EGYPT

Why it's so difficult: Arabic has very few words that resemble those of European languages. Written Arabic also uses fewer vowels, which can be difficult for those learning to read the language.

日本語

Japanese







122 million native speakers

Country with greatest number of speakers:



JAPAN

Why it's so difficult: Like Chinese, Japanese language learners need to memorize thousands of characters. Three different writing systems and two syllabary systems add to the language's difficulty.

<h1>中文</h1> <p>Chinese</p>	 <p>1.2 billion native speakers</p>	<h1>한국어</h1> <p>Korean</p>	 <p>66.3 million native speakers</p>
Country with greatest number of speakers:	 <p>CHINA</p>	Country with greatest number of speakers:	 <p>SOUTH KOREA</p>
<p>Why it's so difficult: Chinese is a tonal language, in which meaning changes as you change the tone of a word. Plus, thousands of characters and a complex writing system make learning Chinese a formidable task.</p>		<p>Why it's so difficult: Different sentence structure, syntax, and verb conjugations make learning Korean difficult for native English speakers. Written Korean also relies on many Chinese characters.</p>	
<p>SOURCES: Interagency Language Roundtable, Al-Bab.com, MyLanguages.org, Google Translate, Ethnologue.com, Foreign Service Institute, Wikipedia</p>			
			